



State of Wisconsin
GOVERNOR'S STATE TRAILS COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 9, 2017 – Teleconference

Public Participation

- Room 613, GEF 2 Building, 101 S. Webster Street, Madison
- Conference Room 1, DNR Service Center 107 Sutliff Avenue, Rhinelander

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

State Trails Council Members present:

Dave Cieslewicz [for Robbie Webber], road bicycling representative (Executive Director of the *Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin (BFW)*)

Randy Harden, ATV/UTV representative (member of *Wisconsin ATV-UTV Association*)

Leif Hubbard, *Wisconsin Department of Transportation* [non-voting]

Kricket Jewett [for Ken Carpenter], equestrian representative (member of *Wisconsin Horse Council*)

Doug Johnson, snowmobiling representative (member of *Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs*)
[STC Secretary]

Skip Maletzke, tourism/business representative [non-voting]

Bryan Much, off-highway motorcycle representative (member of *Wisconsin Off-Highway Motorcycle Association*) [STC Chair]

Ken Neitzke, hiking representative (member of the *Ice Age Trail Alliance*) [STC Vice-Chair]

Ben Popp [for Mike McFadzen], cross-country skiing representative (Executive Director of the *American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation*)

Luana Schneider, 4-wheel drive vehicles representative (member of *Wisconsin 4-Wheel Drive Association*)

John Siegert, off-road bicycling representative (member of *Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin*)

Jim White, boards and small wheels representative

State Trails Council Members not in attendance

Ken Carpenter, equestrian representative

Phil Johnsrud, non-motorized water trails representative

Robbie Webber, road bicycling representative (member of *Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin*)

Others present

Hank Wozniel, member of *Wisconsin ATV-UTV Association*

WI DNR Staff present:

Brigit Brown, Daniel Buckler, Ed Slaminski, Jillian Steffes

10:02 A.M. – Welcome and introductions

- Much called the meeting to order. Council members and guests introduced themselves.

10:04 A.M. – Agenda review/repair and approval of November meeting minutes

- Johnson moved to approve of the November minutes. Harden seconded. Motion passed.

10:05 A.M. – Chair report



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- Much said that the Council needs more applicants for the three vacancies – water, equestrian, and road bicycling. Jewett said she knows of two more people who applied to the equestrian position.
- Siegert commented that another Council (the Governor's Bicycle Coordinating Committee) had three council members who were replaced in 2016, and asked why they were able to do that and not the STC? Brown replied that the Councils are statutorily different and that may account for the difference.
- Much brought up the DNR's Recreational Opportunities Analysis project, which is an inventory of existing recreational opportunities in the state. Several major statewide user groups received invitations for that initiative.

10:08 A.M. – Discussion on unicycles

- Brown asked for advice on how the DNR should treat unicycles. Right now it's a use that legally doesn't fit into any DNR categories. It doesn't fit into the definition of a bicycle. Research shows that in several other states unicycles are treated the same way as bicycles. Also, all indications are that their impact is similar to that of bicycles.
- Siegert said his initial thought is to not treat them differently from bikes.
- Cieslewicz has not heard a lot at BikeFed from unicycle users, but he said it makes sense to treat them the same as bicycles.
- Brown said that there is no statewide unicycle organization, though there was a big mountain bike event in the KMSF Southern Unit (Fall Color Festival) in which there was a separate competitive category just for unicycles. There was very strong representation, particularly from Illinois, and there were comments from participants about riding more in Wisconsin.
- Three possible options: case by case, remain closed, or open all existing bicycle trails up.
- Much suggested that trails where bicycles are allowed should be generally open to unicycles unless specifically closed rather than be considered on an individual case-by-case basis. Schneider asked about the law related to unicycles on highways. Brown and Hubbard said they're classified as play vehicles and not allowed on highways. Thus a trail that relies on a linear highway segment as a connector where unicycles are not allowed may need to restrict the use of unicycles on that trail. Schneider thinks as many trails as possible should be open to as many uses as possible, with which Johnson agreed. Johnson also said that if people in the bicycle community don't have a problem, he finds no reason to take an issue.

10:16 A.M. – In-progress report of ad-hoc committee on Council structure revisions

- Much recapped the Council's requirement to review the Council's structure pertaining to Council seats and represented user groups. The Council is to decide in April about whether they need a change, but ad-hoc committee members McFadzen, Schneider and White were to provide an update to the Council at this meeting.
- White and Schneider had not had communicated about the issue since the last meeting, but Schneider generally feels that the structure is good. But Schneider noted that the Council Web page is not clear that if a user is looking for a contact but doesn't see their use identified in the Council structure, for that user to reach out to Brown, who can then direct them to the appropriate representative.
- Much reminded the ad hoc committee and council members that the April meeting was the target date to complete the project by having council members determine if there should be changes to the council structure or not.

10:21 A.M. – DNR Report

- Brown gave an overview of the Recreational Opportunities Analysis project. The DNR is undertaking a project to look at rec opportunities and needs in Wisconsin. For example, SCORP looks at what is out there, but this project is trying to drill down to next level of what the needs are. What are the activities people want to do? Where can they do it? Where are there still needs?



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- Brown noted that about seventy different activities already take place or are requested to take place on DNR land. This analysis will identify where those activities can be currently pursued, but not just on DNR land. The DNR is forming a statewide stakeholder group and will have a few meetings over the next two months. Invitation letters were recently sent out. Brown sees user groups providing feedback to the department, perhaps in the way of an activity factsheet. What is the activity, where is it, what types of environments or amenities are needed? How much land is needed? What is the impact on the environment or other rec users? How is it impacted from other uses? How far are people willing to travel? One purpose of the analysis is so that every time there is a master plan, the DNR doesn't have to go through the same process that holds master plans up for so long. The goal is that when a plan is started, planners are armed with a lot of recreational data already, though not just trail-based recreation (also dog training, bird watching, etc.). There is a very short timeline; the first stage is to be wrapped up by April, and by the end of summer the project as a whole completed. It will be very important to get the word out to user groups. The best way to stay informed is an email list that you can sign up to later this week. There will probably be a press release next week.
- Brown recapped the 2013 law requiring the DNR to make a determination on public roads regarding their status as open or closed to motorized recreational uses. The DNR is still inventorying those roads. An element of that ROA is to gather some public feedback on that project. There might be more questions on the analysis about motorized road activities in some parts of the state which receive more pressure about those uses, like at the Northern Highland – American Legion State Forest, but the ROA project will look at the entire spectrum of rec uses.
- Brown reviewed the topic of motorized vehicles used for trail maintenance. She said that sometimes motorized vehicles are used for maintenance on nonmotorized trails. There is an internal process to decide those things. Previously the DNR didn't have legal authority to use UTVs and ATVs on public roads, but now the department has that ability. The DNR recognizes that a lot of user groups do a lot of maintenance on our trails and they often like to use vehicles. Every time somebody is using power equipment as a volunteer the DNR has to enter into certain agreements with those volunteers.
- Buckler summarized work that Parks' staff are doing to compile recreational infrastructure GIS data across the state that will enable the creation of accurate maps and the ability to inventory infrastructure on Parks' properties. Much suggested that the department consider crowdsourcing as a tool to help them keep department recreation maps up to date indicating that this is a popular and valuable practice.
- Brown provided an update on the proposed administrative code changes that affect use of department properties is going to the Natural Resources Board later this month for the department's final approval before going to the legislature. Some of those proposals include topics such as:
 - Updating the definition of a bicycle to make consistent with the Department of Transportation.
 - Eliminating some abilities to cheat the camping reservation system.
 - The limited use of electric bicycles on some properties.

10:51 A.M. – Recreational Trails Program process discussion

- Slaminski said that every year the department looks at its grants' rating and ranking system and tweak it to make the guidance more clear and fair for projects across the state. This year, the Grant Program Guidance was reduced from 75 pages to 26. The guidance document includes different kinds of grants, including the Federal Recreational Trails Program.
- Slaminski said that the funding criteria are not too different from previous editions. He said that this guidance is in draft form. It will be taken to the Stewardship Advisory Council in late January, go out for a 21-day public comment period, and then it will be available to people to fill out in late February or early March.
- Slaminski said he could receive any questions or comments, either now or in an email. If through email at a later point, please CC Buckler in those emails.
- Much asked if any criteria are more restrictive than in the past, or any big revisions in awarding points. Slaminski replied that there are not.



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- Multiple meeting attendees commented that the reduced page size is much better and more approachable for potential applicants.
- Much asked if there is language in the document dissuading people from splitting projects? Slaminski said that there is. It was suggested that that dissuasion could be more emphasized.
- Harden asked for clarification over what kind of organizations are eligible to apply for grants. He said that so many groups he is involved with are 501(c)(4) or (c)(6). Harden asked if that should that be a 501(c) in general, or do you have to be an exact 501(c)(3)? He said it's a roadblock for a lot of organizations because (c)(3) is expensive and hard to receive. Brown agreed that clarification is needed. Schneider thought that (c)(7) was allowed? Brown said that any land acquisition has to be requested as a Stewardship grant and the requester, if not a government, has to be a 501(c)(3). Slaiminski said that the RTP is a bit more open and for any incorporated group whose primary goal is trail activities.
 - For any further questions, Slaminski could be reached at: 715-635-4130
- It was noted that this is the 25th year of RTP and over 22,000 projects have been funded. The funding is supplied via a gas tax on motorized recreational users, but that money goes back toward trail projects for all user groups.
- Slaminski said they have not yet received federal approval for this round of grants, though it will occur soon.

11:14 A.M. – DNR Alignment; funding parks and trails

- Brown noted that the department is beginning to implement its alignment process. Law Enforcement rangers with the Wisconsin State Park System will no longer be credential law enforcement. This role will be led by DNR wardens on Parks properties. The Bureau of Parks and Recreation has been renamed the Bureau of Parks and Recreation Management. This reflects that the Bureau is the home to DNR recreational management, not just on Parks' properties. Habitat management, forestry, hunting and fishing programs will be done through specialized programs, instead of being managed by just one property. Parks is giving up approximately 44 law enforcement positions, but staff will be added in the Central Office.
- Much expressed concern over the effects of unfilled positions, not only in the headquarters, but also in the field.
- Brown noted that the department will figure out how the transition will take place with wardens.
- Brown also noted that heavy equipment is being sold off by the DNR with certain exceptions, like for fire-fighting activities. Additionally, some services will probably be contracted out, such as prescribed burning. With such short burn windows, the DNR probably does not have enough staff to do all the necessary burning.
- Much then transitioned the conversation to park and trail funding, asking Brown what uses currently require a trail pass. Brown replied that the trail pass is for those trails/uses which require higher levels of maintenance, but don't have a separate funding source, like bicycling or groomed cross-country skiing. She remarked that the trail pass does not even cover 40% of trail costs, with the balance coming from other Parks' fees.
- Much said that a report the DNR submitted to the legislature described a variety of options for legislators to consider regarding funding including implementing fees for additional properties and doing things like requiring fees (stickers) for kayaks/canoes and perhaps other uses. Brown said that all things are being looked at by Parks. But Parks is trying to learn from the legislature what they would be allowed to do. Much asked that the [Non-Motorized Recreation and Transportation Trails Council](#) likewise explore issues related to options for contributing to additional funding for parks and trails within their areas of interest.
- Popp said that the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation just went through an effort to have other user groups help support trail work. He said that the Foundation just did about \$500,000 worth of maintenance on trails and as nonprofit that is quite a lot of money. They then called for a ski trail pass



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on the Birkebeiner course, but there was a very large pushback from the community. However, there was a really good discussion over 8-9 months between the Foundation and the community, eventually getting people to realize that the fees were useful. Popp said he could share his story with the NRTTC.

- There was a general consensus among council members to explore more options to contribute to increasing funding for parks and trails.
- Brown said that Parks had good revenue from camping this past year. There is a large demand for electric campsites. However, currently the number of electric campsites across the state is capped.

11:41 A.M. – Council member report highlights

- User group reports were submitted beforehand and distributed to the Council. There was general consensus that this was a good practice and in the future written user group reports should be submitted and distributed before the meeting. The full submitted reports are below in an appendix, but some things were highlighted by Council members.
- Hiking – Neitzke noted that first-day hikes were very successful.
- Snowmobiles – Johnson said that it's a slow start to the season. Some counties are still in the process of recovery from storm damage, though most have trails open. Celebrate Wisconsin snowmobile event is February 19-20 in Siren. Johnson also praised the Department of Tourism for their website and for the snow conditions report. He said it is a wonderful tool for snowmobile users, skiers and other winter enthusiasts.
- Equestrians – Jewett said that the Wisconsin Horse Council is hosting a February 11 event with sleigh rides, skijoring and bobsledding. They are still looking for some volunteers for those activities. The Trails Committee of the Horse Council is organizing more trail schools for 2017. There might be three trail schools in 2017. So far there is interest in Vilas and Milwaukee counties, and Jewett said the Horse Council is eyeing western Wisconsin, potentially around Prairie du Chien.
- ATV/UTV – Harden expressed hope about getting Go Wild data in order to better understand recreational trends.
- Cross-country skiing – Popp said that his Foundation is getting ready for Birkebeiner in February. Almost 14,000 people will be participating. He said that skiing has not been that bad for how little snow and much rain they received. A bigger push for snowmaking facilities is developing in big metropolitan areas, especially to develop the interest in youth and give them nearby locations to ski. A biathlon program is developing in Wisconsin and is exciting for bringing together different communities of people.
- 4WD – Schneider said that there is a potential small off-road park on private property being discussed, though she did not have the details on exactly where in the state.
- Tourism – Maletzke said that the Wisconsin Governor's Conference on Tourism is being held March 12-14 in Milwaukee. He noted that 2016 was a good year for the tourism industry in Wisconsin.

11:50 A.M. – Public comment

- No public comments received.

11:51 A.M. – Identify future agenda items

- Action by the council to confirm or modify current council structure as required by the internal biennial review process.
- Hiking groups to give presentations in August
- Road inventory implementation update in April
- Recreational opportunities analysis update in April
- Presentation on Birkie funding by Ben Popp

11:54 A.M. – Adjourn

- Harden moved to adjourn the meeting. Johnson seconded. Meeting adjourned.



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Appendix – User Group Reports

- **Snowmobiling.** It seems like a slow start to the snowmobile season in most of the State. Currently 22 counties have open or partially open snowmobile trails, mostly in the north and northeast.

Tragically, there have been two snowmobile related fatalities so far this season.

SNARS - the Snowmobile Automated Reporting System for reporting and recording trail maintenance and grooming is a work in progress. The Governor's Snowmobile Recreation Council and our Department of Natural Resources have been working together on this program. The DNR has been providing training to County Trail Coordinators and snowmobile club members to get everyone up to speed on the new system.

Some counties are still in the process of repairing storm damaged trails, but most are open for the winter

The Vintage Snowmobile Derby, held in Eagle River, will take place 12-15 January.

The Wisconsin Military Appreciation Ride will take place on the 16th of January, also in Eagle River.

The World Championship Snowmobile Derby, also in Eagle River, 19-22 January.

International Snowmobile Safety Week - 21-29 January

Celebrate Wisconsin Snowmobiling, in Siren, WI, 19-20 February

- **Cross-country skiing.** The largest ski race in the US, the American Birkebeiner is already full, being held Feb 24. Trails are in moderate shape, but more snow would be helpful. Many ski races have taken place with many more on the schedule. There is still snow cover in the kettles though the state was devastated by rain on December 26. The grade school-based Nordic Rocks! continues to grow. Over 10,000 children in 64 different Midwest schools have now participated in the program. Over 30 schools in the Midwest will be getting skis. The program has partnered with the [National Winter Sports Education Foundation](#) and the [United States Ski and Snowboard Association](#) to enroll an additional 35 schools from California to Vermont into the program. New additions in Wisconsin include schools in La Crosse, Hurley, Neenah, Ashland, Washburn, Three Lakes, Wales, Milwaukee and Madison. More information on the program in April.
- **Hiking.** This has been an exceptional holiday season for winter hiking. Not too cold and not too much snow. Hiking trails in general have seen heavy use the last few weeks especially between Christmas and New Year's.

On New Year's Day, America's State Parks had all 50 states offering free, guided First Day Hike Programs. These hikes provide a means for individuals and families to welcome the coming year in the outdoors, exercising and connecting with nature. There were (12) New Year's Day First Day hikes this year that were held in (12) Wisconsin state park properties and were once again a great success.



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The First Day Hike at Lapham Peak hosted by the Waukesha / Milwaukee County Chapter of the Ice Age Trail Alliance had over 200 hikers. The First Day Hike at Gibraltar Rock hosted by the Lodi Chapter of the Ice Age Trail Alliance had over 50 hikers and the numbers from the other hikes are still coming in.

The Ice Age Trail Alliance has released its 2017 Mobile Skills Crew (MSC) project list with 14 major trail building projects for around the state.

The North Country Trail hosted the First Day Hike at Pattison State Park. The snow in the northern part of the state has not slowed down the hikers who are embarking on the North Country Trail Hike 100 Challenge.

The USFS has opened the eastern sections of NCT in the Chequamegon National Forest, but there are still issues with some of the larger bridges having erosion problems on the approaches. The trail is open but you will need to use CAUTION in hiking these sections of NCT. NOTE: Some Forest Roads are still closed - for a list and map of Forest Road closings you can go to the Chequamegon Chapter's website at <http://northcountrytrail.org/che/> and click on "Alert" or "Current Trail Conditions".

The U.S. Senate passed the *Outdoor Recreation Jobs and Economic Impact Act of 2016* this week. This bill was passed by the House of Representatives in mid-November. This legislation, once signed by the President, would have the Bureau of Economic Analysis thoroughly assess the economic impact of outdoor recreation on the national economy.

The American Hiking Society has supported such action since early in 2015 in the hopes that improved data would further make the case that public lands and hiking trails are more than just fun – they're good business. With so many competing priorities for tight funding from various sources, sometimes it is too easy for decision makers to think of hiking and public lands as non-essential when in fact trails not only keep health costs in check by promoting physical activity but are truly economic engines for the U.S. economy

- ***All-terrain vehicles and utility terrain vehicles.*** 2016 has been frustrating, not being able to obtain registration numbers from our DNR customer service / registration folks. This data provides the number of ATV & UTV owners per machine registrations. I've been told this is because of the changeover to the Go Wild system and the many related challenges associated with same. Our leadership team counts on and uses this data to identify developing trends necessary to plan our strategies as we continue to support and to discuss potential changes needed for the overall wellbeing of our registration program.

Our third generation Trail Patrol Ambassador program, referred to as the Next Generation Trail Ambassador program (NextGen), continues in development and localized testing. Tentative plans are to release the roll out in late summer / early fall of 2017.

Statewide annual conference and educational workshops will be Saturday, April 29th in Rothschild <greater Wausau area>.

Regional rides & workshops follow on Saturday, July 15th in the Northeast Region and Saturday, August 12th in the Northwest Region. Still determining if there will be a Southern Regional setting.



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The Wisconsin ATV / UTV Association is involved on a new committee with the goal to create a unified approach and documents and/or policy guidance for Traffic Safety Commissions / Counties / Municipalities considering or currently using roads for ATV / UTV traffic. Involved and invited groups include:

- Wisconsin Traffic Safety Coordinators Association
- Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation
- Wisconsin DNR, Bureau of Law Enforcement
- Wisconsin ATV UTV Association / NOHVIS Group

- **4-Wheel Drive Vehicles.** Not a lot happens in the Four Wheel Drive world at this time of year. There are some ice races that might be occurring, but I haven't heard of any quite as of yet. Some folks do snow bashing on some of the remote roads that usually don't get plowed—this can be quite an experience especially in deep snow and drifts! We have our regular meetings coming up with Wisconsin 4WD Association (W4WDA) having a meeting January 14 in Waupaca. Then on April 7-9 the Wisconsin Off-Highway Vehicle Association (WOHVA) will be hosting the combined meetings of the two associations in Tomah with separate business meetings that Saturday morning, but other combined programs. Those combined programs will consist of an all-day Tread Trainer program on Friday presented by Tread Lightly. I assume anyone interested is welcome to participate, but I do not know the cost or more details at this time. If interested contact me and I will steer you in the right direction. On Saturday there is hope of having someone from the DNR and Tread Lightly do presentations—exact program not solidified as of yet.

As far as the potential legislation is concerned I hope the new individual who is spearheading this will see clear to get this on track soon.

Looking forward to more wheeling available right here in Wisconsin this coming year!

- **Off-highway motorcycles.** The Natural Resources Board recently approved dual sport motorcycle use at the Sauk Prairie State Recreation Area under a program of repurposing other trails on a temporary basis up to six days per year. Repurposing is a concept the DNR adopted to expand recreational opportunities without the requirement for additional dedicated land and facilities. Now that sufficient ice is in place, many off-highway motorcyclists have transitioned to ice riding using special tires for their motorcycles. Much of this riding is done by informal groups but two organized events are coming up soon. The [Steel Shoe Fund 3 Hour Endurance Fundraiser](#) will be held near Campbellsport on January 22nd. Another three-hour charity event, the [Frosty Cheeks endurance ride](#), will be held near Lodi on January 14th. A third motorcycle ice event will be held [on January 28 at Lake Koshkonong](#). Overview [video of an endurance ice riding event](#). For an example of ice riding, please see [recent photos from Okauchee](#).
- **Mountain Biking / Off-Road Bicycles.**
- IMBA World Summit in Bentonville, AR in November
 - First Summit ever to sell-out
 - Good representation from Wisconsin – probably because it's the closest an IMBA Summit has ever been to Wisconsin
 - Excellent example of a community – actually, a collection of communities in the NW AR region – that has committed not only to investing in trails, both paved and natural surface, but also to developing a trail *system*, where all the components work together. Of course, it helps to have the younger generations of the Walton family, and in turn, the Walton Family Foundation, enthused about mountain biking, but even Walmart,



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the company, seems to recognize that these kinds of public investments help them to attract talent to Arkansas.

- Fat bike activity only increasing
 - CAMBA/IMBA Fat Bike Workshop January 20-21, featuring our own Brigit Brown
 - Hugh Jass race series– Milwaukee area
 - Snowshoe Scurry race series – Dane County
 - Powder Keg – Eau Claire
 - Seeley Big Fat Race, Fat Bike Birkie event – Chequamegonland
- Wausau group (CWOCC) posts grooming reports and tire inflation guidance on their home page. Tire inflation guidance is clearly geared toward preserving the quality of the trail grooming
- Wisconsin High School Cycling League (National Interscholastic Cycling Association – NICA – Affiliate) Recap of 2016

Some raw numbers:

- Athletes: 478 up from 310
- Certified Coaches: 266 up from 169
- Teams: 30 up from 27

- Total coaches: 266
- Female: 60 – 22%
- Male: 206 – 78%
- Without child in league: 98 – 37% (surprising and awesome!)
- With child in league: 169 – 66%
- Teachers: 19 – 7% (Those with at least 1 teacher had more kids on the team and more HS-aged kids.)

Coach Level breakdown:

- 216 – General Volunteers/81% of total coaches
- 14 – Ride Leaders/5% of total coaches
- 4 – Assistant Coaches/1.5% of total coaches
- 30 – Head Coaches/11 % of total coaches
- 10 out of 30 Teams did NOT have a head coach. Oops!!! We need to fix that!

Athlete number breakdowns:

- 478 Total athletes
- 322 Athletes did at least 1 race – 67%
- 108 Female Athletes – 23%
- 369 Male Athletes – 77%

Average Racers Per Race: 315

Gender/Grade Breakdown:

- Female/6th grade – 16
- Female/7th grade – 20
- Female/8th grade – 19
- Female 9th grade – 15
- Female/10 grade – 20
- Female/11th grade – 10



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- Female/12th grade – 8

- Male/6th grade – 42
- Male/7th grade – 56
- Male/8th grade – 62
- Male/9th grade – 69
- Male/10th grade – 72
- Male/11th grade – 42
- Male/12th grade – 26

- 34 Seniors will graduate

With that said, the 3 main areas for growth next year are:

1. More Teams
2. More Athletes
3. More Girls